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ever, the man's strong judgment, his phenomenal will, his power of dealing with "impossible" situations, are clearly apparent. It is worth noting that Venizelos was a supporter of monarchy so far as monarchy meant stability. He has been criticized for not stirring up a revolution when on October 5, 1918, he was forced by the King to resign, though he had a majority in the Chamber. "But those who have made this criticism," said he, "seem to be lacking in psychological insight. No man is changed in twenty-four hours from the responsible adviser of a country with a regularly established form of government into a revolutionary leader. . . . But even if this could be regarded as an accusation aimed at me on the ground that I did not prove to be a man of quick decision, I should still have to answer that it was impossible for me to follow any other course than the one I did. At that moment it was not possible for me to make a stand for the liberties of the State. Such a contest would have provoked a civil war."

BACK TO METHUSELAH. By Bernard Shaw. New York: Brentano's.

A prophet is a person with a simple but terrifying message, a critic whose comments upon his contemporaries are unsparing to the verge of abusiveness, a preacher unconventional enough to shock his hearers and visionary enough to inspire them. This, if not a satisfactory definition, is a fair description—and it applies to Shaw.

His message, in *Back to Methuselah*, is the simple and terrifying one that evolution is *creative*, and that the same power which created mankind can and will destroy it and put something better in its place, if the human species proves inadequate. It is a message which places upon every person a kind of cosmic responsibility. His satire, ranging over human life from the Garden of Eden to the confines of an incomprehensible future, exposes forgivable human weakness or inexcusable imbecility, in no despairing mood, but with a kind of cheerfulness and zest which can be felt only by one who has a disagreeable mission from on high. Crabbed or gentle, subtle and dexterous or comic with an extravagance bordering on horseplay, he damns human nature with a grin and at the same time proclaims its inherent greatness. His visions, if not beautiful, at least go far toward convincing one that the human race can do what it will.

Any competent imaginative writer could build up an entire new order of things upon the supposition that certain human beings in some way acquired the power of living for three hundred years or more. Only Shaw could perceive that the long-lived ones would be shy of second marriages, that they would get into trouble with the pension authorities, that the prospect of long life would increase the horror of rheumatism; or could have foreseen the effect upon the short-lived people of the thought that they too might be of the elect. Only he could have worked the play into such a shape that he could make a Chinese "Chief Secretary" tell a British "President", with entire convincingness and with assured superiority, that he was nothing but a good-natured barbarian,

congenitally incapable of understanding the art of government. The thing takes every conceivable turn, and it all seems true.

But when we reach the last of the five plays which make up the book—the one called *As Far as Thought Can Reach*—we get into a region where satire becomes pessimism in spite of itself. Human progress is here conceived no otherwise than as a hypertrophy of intellect accompanied by an atrophy of feeling. It is a shrewd and deep stroke which reveals all art as essentially a matter of playing with dolls; but the long-lived “ancients” of this play are really almost as distressing as the Struldburghs—those unhappy immortals imagined by Swift. They are so aimless that despite their vast powers they appear to be in a kind of terrible second childhood. The trouble seems to be that Shaw conceives the creative will, not as inner self and inner law in one, but as a kind of cosmic magic that may be used for the satisfaction of whim. Hence it is seen to be as lawless and cruel as the justly despised “Circumstantial Selection” of the non-creative evolutionists. Aimlessness strikes one as no better than mechanism.

Exaggeration, which is of the essence of the comic method, is illuminating up to a certain point, but breaks down and proves misleading when it deals with final questions. Comedy, the great revealer of human nature to itself, cannot conceive problems of destiny, and when forced to make the attempt imagines monstrosities, mere distorted figures, neither amusing nor significant.

THE MASTER OF MAN. By Hall Caine. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.

There is no question, of course, about Hall Caine's new novel being melodrama. It has even the superficial marks—to such an extent that just as one has yielded to the appeal of a tale which—melodramatic or not—is well plotted and “strong”, one is jarred by some such cliché as, “Not a leaf stirred.” But it will not do to be merely supercilious. There is a real question about this novel—namely, Does its being *spiritual* melodrama make it better or worse?

The pivotal character of the story is Victor Stowell, son of a much respected and justice-loving Manx deemster, or judge. Victor falls in love with Fenella Stanley, the Governor's daughter—an angelic young woman; but during her long absence from the island, he commits an indiscretion with a young peasant girl, Bessie Collister. His honorable traditions constrain him to marry Bessie, but first he sends her to live with some elderly maiden ladies who undertake her education. Then two things happen, both seemingly fortunate for Victor: Fenella comes home and falls as deeply in love with him as he with her; and his best friend, Alick Gell, falls in love with Bessie. A little blind on the moral side, he conceals from Alick the fact of Bessie's misstep, and with a blindness less easy to understand, he is quite unprepared for what follows. Bessie is at